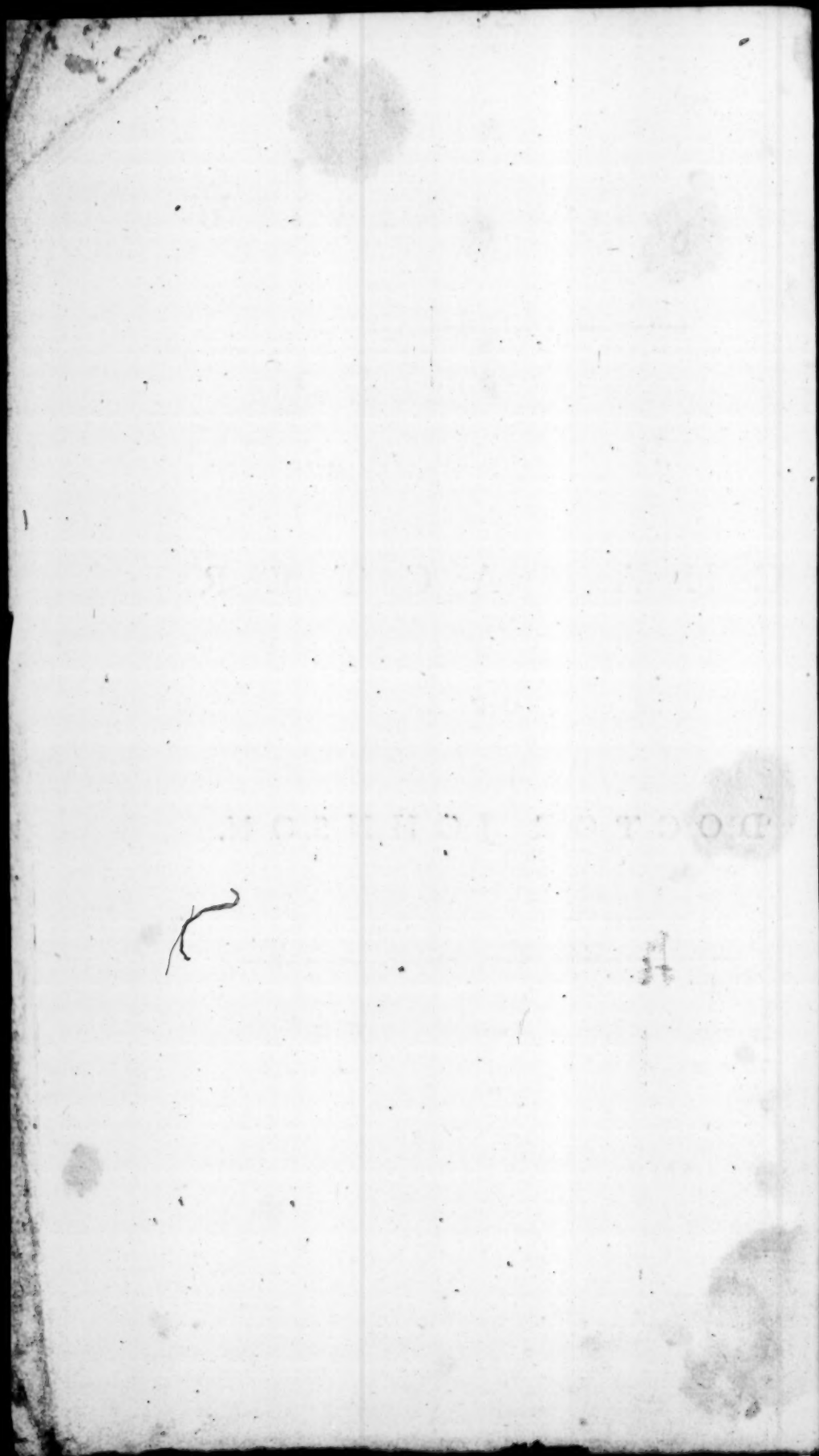

LITERARY AND MORAL
C H A R A C T E R
OF
DOCTOR JOHNSON.



A
POETICAL REVIEW

OF THE

LITERARY AND MORAL CHARACTER

OF THE LATE

SAMUEL JOHNSON, L.L.D.

WITH NOTES.

By JOHN COURTENAY, Esq.

Man is thy theme; his virtue, or his rage,
Drawn to the life, in each elaborate page. WALLER.

— *immensa veluti connexa carinae*
Cymba minor. STATIUS.

D U B L I N:

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M, DCC, LXXXVI.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

REPORT

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Tom Richardson Esq

A

POETICAL REVIEW, &c.

A Generous tear will Caledonia shed?
Her ancient foe, illustrious Johnson's dead:
Mac-Ossian's sons may now securely rest,
Safe from the bitter sneer, the cynick jest (1).
Lost is the man, who scarce deigns Gray to praise,
But from the grave calls Blackmore's sleeping lays;
A passport

(1) "A Scotchman must be a sturdy moralist, who does not prefer Scotland to truth." Johnson's *Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland*.

A passport grants to Pomfret's dismal chimes,
To Yalden's hymns, and Watts's holy rhimes (2);

By

(a) " The Poems of Dr. Watts were by my recommendation inserted in this collection; the readers of which are to impute to me whatever pleasure or weariness they may find in the perusal of Blackmore, Watts, Pomfret and Yalden." *Johnson's Life of Watts.*

The following specimen of their productions may be sufficient to enable the reader to judge of their respective merits:

" Alas, Jerusalem! alas! where's now

" 'Thy pristine glory, thy unmatched renown,

" To which the heathen monarchies did bow?

" Ah, hapless, miserable town!"

*Eleazar's Lamentation over Jerusalem,
paraphrased by Pomfret.*

" Before the Almighty Artist fram'd the sky,

" Or gave the earth its harmony,

" His first command was for thy light;

" He view'd the lovely birth, and blessed it:

" *In purple swaddling bands it struggling lay,*

" Old Chaos then a cheerful smile put on,

" And from thy beauteous form did first presage its own."

Yalden's Hymn to Light.

" My

By subtle doubts would Swift's fair fame invade,

And round his brows the ray of glory shade (3):

With

" My chearful soul now all the day

" Sits waiting here and sings,

" Looks through the ruins of her clay,

" And practises her wings.

" O, rather let this flesh decay,

" The ruins wider grow !

" Till glad to see the enlarged way,

" I stretch my pinions through."

A Sight of Heaven in Sickness, by Isaac Watts.

(3) " He seemed to me to have an unaccountable prejudice against Swift.—He said to-day—I doubt if the *Tale of a Tub* was his; it has so much more thinking, more knowledge, more power, more colour, than any of the works that are indisputably his. If it was his, I shall only say, it was *impar sibi*." Boswell's *Tour to the Hebrides*, p. 38.

Doctor Johnson's " unaccountable prejudice against Swift" may probably be derived from the same source as Blackmore's, if we may venture to form a judgment from the panegyrick he bestows on the following groundless invective, expressly aimed at Swift as the author of *A Tale of a Tub*, which he quotes in his life of Blackmore : " Several, in their books, have many
sarcastical

With poignant taunt mild Shenstone's life arraigns,

His taste contemns, and sweetly-flowing strains ;

At

satirical and spiteful strokes at religion in general ; while others make themselves pleasant with the principles of the Christian. Of the last kind, this age has seen a most audacious example, in the book intituled "*A Tale of a Tub*." Had this writing been published in a pagan or *popish* nation, who are *justly* impatient of all indignity offered to the established religion of their country, no doubt but the author would have received the punishment he deserved.—But the fate of this impious buffoon is very different ; for in a protestant kingdom, zealous of their civil and religious immunities, he has not only escaped affronts and the effects of publick resentment, but has been carressed and patronised by persons of great figure of all denominations.

The malevolent dullness of bigotry alone could have inspired Blackmore with these sentiments. The fact is, that the *Tale of a Tub* is a continued panegyrick on the Church of England, and a bitter satire on Popery, Calvinism and every sect of dissenters. At the same time I am persuaded, that every reader of taste and discernment will perceive in many parts of Swift's other writings, strong internal proofs of that style which characterises the *Tale of a Tub* ; especially in the

Publick

At zealous Milton aim his tory dart,
But in his Savage finds a moral heart ;

At

Publick Spirit of the Whigs. It is well known, that he affected simplicity, and studiously avoided any display of learning, except where the subject made it absolutely necessary. Temporary, local, and political topics compose too great a part of his works ; but in a treatise that admitted " more thinking, more knowledge," &c. he naturally exerted his powers.—Let us hear the author himself on this point.

" The greatest part of that book was finished above thirteen years since, (1696) which is eight years before it was published. The author was then young, his invention at the height, and his reading fresh in his head." And again : " Men should be more cautious in losing their time, if they did but consider, that to answer a book effectually requireth more pains and skill, more wit, learning and judgment than were employed in writing it.—And the author assureth those gentlemen, who have given themselves that trouble with him, that his discourse is the product of the study, the observation, and the invention of *several years* ; that he often blotted out more than he left ; and if his papers had not been a long time out of his possession, they must still have undergone more severe correction."

An Apology for the Tale of a Tub.—With respect to this work being the production of Swift, see his letter to the printer,

B

Mr.

At great Nassau despiteful rancour flings (4),
 But pension'd kneels ev'n to usurping kings:
 Rich, old and dying, bows his laurel'd head,
 And almost deigns to ask superfluous bread (5).

A SCEPTIC once, he taught the letter'd throng
 To doubt the existence of fam'd Ossian's song;

Yet

Mr. Benjamin Tooke, dated Dublin, June 29, 1710, and Tooke's Answer on the publication of *the Apology* and a new edition of the *Tale of a Tub*. Hawkesworth's edition of Swift's Works, 8vo. vol. xvi. p. 145.

Doctor Hawkesworth mentions, in his preface, that the edition of *A Tale of a Tub*, printed in 1710, was revised and corrected by the Dean a short time before his understanding was impaired, and that the corrected copy was, in the year 1760, in the hands of his kinsman, Mr. Deane Swift.

(4) *Johnson*. "I would tell truth of the two Georges, or of that scoundrel, King William." *Boswell's Tour to the Hebrides*, p. 312.

(5) See his letter to Lord Thurlow, in which he seems to approve of the application (though he was not previously consulted), thanks his Lordship for having made it, and even seems to express some degree of surprize and resentment on the proposed addition to his pension being refused.

Yet by the eye of faith, in reason's spite,
 Saw ghosts and witches, preach'd up *second sight*,
 For o'er his soul sad Superstition threw
 Her gloom, and ting'd his genius with her hue.
 On popish ground he takes his high church station,
 To sound mysterious tenets through the nation (6);

On

(6) " If (added Dr. Johnson) God had never spoken figuratively, we might hold that he speaks literally, when he says, " This is my body." Boswell's *Tour*, p. 67.—Here his only objection to transubstantiation seems to rest on the style of the Scripture being figurative elsewhere as well as in this passage. Hence we may infer, that he would otherwise have believed in it.—But Archbishop Tillotson and Mr. Locke reason more philosophically, by asserting that " no doctrine, however clearly expressed in Scripture, is to be admitted, if it contradict the evidence of our senses :—For our evidence for the truth of revealed religion is *less* than the evidence for the truth of our senses, because, *even* in the first authors of our religion, it was no greater; and it is evident it must diminish in passing from them to us, through the medium of human testimony."

On Scotland's kirk he vents a bigot's gall (7),
 Though her young chieftains prophecy like
 SAUL (8)!

On Tetty's state his frightened fancy runs (9),
 And Heaven's appeas'd by cross unbutter'd
 buns (10):

He sleeps and fasts (11), pens on himself a li-
 bel (12),

And

(7) See his conversation with Lord Auchinleck. Boswell's
Tour.

(8) See the First Book of Samuel, ch. x.

(9) "And I commend to thy fatherly goodness the soul of
 my departed wife, beseeching thee to grant her whatever is
 best in her present state." Johnson's *Meditations*.

(10) "I returned home, but could not settle my mind. At
 last I read a chapter. Then went down about six or seven,
 and eat two cross buns." *Meditations*, p. 154.

(11) "I fasted, though less rigorously than at other times.
 I by negligence poured some milk into my tea." *Ibid.* p. 146.
 —Yesterday, I fasted, as I have always, or commonly done,
 since the death of Tetty; the fast was more painful than usual."

(12) "PURPOSES.

"To keep a journal. To begin this day. (Sept. 18, 1766.)

"To

And still believes, but never reads the Bible (13).
 Fame says, 'at school, of scripture science vain,
 Bell and the Dragon smote him on the brain (14);
 Scar'd with the wound, he shun'd the Jewish
 law,

And ey'd the Ark with reverential awe (15):
 Let priestly S—h—n in a godly fit
 The tale relate, in aid of Holy Writ ;

Though

“ To spend four hours in study every day, and as much
 “ more as I can.

“ To read a portion of Scripture in Greek every Sunday.

“ To rise at eight.—Oct. 3d. Of all this I have done no-
 “ thing.” *Ibid.*

(13) “ I resolved last Easter to read, within the year, the
 whole Bible ; a great part of which I have never looked upon.”
Meditations.

(14) “ I have never yet read the Apocrypha. When I was
 a boy I have read or heard Bell and the Dragon.” *Meditations.*

(15) See the First Book of Samuel, ch. v. and vi. in which
 an account is given of the punishment of the Philistines for
 looking into the ark.

Though candid Adams, by whom DAVID fell (16),
 Who ancient miracles sustain'd so well,
 To recent wonders may deny his aid (17),
 Nor own a pious brother of the trade.

A COWARD

(16) The Rev. Dr. Adams of Oxford, distinguished for his answer to David Hume's *Essay on Miracles*.

(17) From the following letter there is reason to apprehend that Dr. Adams would not support Mr. S——n, if he should add this to the other singular anecdotes that he has published relative to Dr. Johnson.

Oxford, Oct. 22d, 1785.

“ Mr. URBAN,

“ In your last month's Review of Books, you have asserted, that the publication of Dr. Johnson's *Prayers and Meditations* appears to have been at the instance of Dr. Adams, Master of Pembroke College, Oxford. This, I think, is more than you are warranted by the editor's preface to say; and is so far from being true, that Dr. Adams never saw a line of these compositions, before they appeared in print, nor ever heard from Dr. Johnson, or the editor, that any such existed. Had he been consulted about the publication, he would certainly have given his vote against it: and he therefore hopes, that you will clear him, in as public a manner as you can, from being any way accessory to it.

WM. ADAMS.”

A COWARD wish, long stigmatiz'd by fame,
 Devotes Mæcenas to eternal shame (18);
 Religious Johnson, future life to gain,
 Would ev'n submit to everlasting pain:
 How clear, how strong, such kindred colours
 paint
 The Roman epicure and Christian saint!

O, had

- (18) " Debilem facite manu,
 " Debilem pede, coxa,
 " Tuber abstrue gibberum;
 " Lubricos quate dentes,
 " Vita dum superest, bene est:
 " Hanc mihi, vel acuta
 " Si fedeam cruce, sustine."

SENEC. EPIST.

Let me but live, the fam'd Mæcenas cries,
 Lame of both hands, and lame in feet and thighs;
 Hump-back'd and toothless;—all convuls'd with pain,
 Ev'n on the cross,—so precious life remain.

Dr. Johnson, in his last illness, is said to have declared (in the presence of Doctors H. and B.) that he would prefer a state of existence in eternal pain to annihilation.

O, had he liv'd in more enlighten'd times,
 When signs from heaven proclaim'd vile mortals' crimes,
 How had he groan'd, with sacred horrors pale,
 When Noah's comet shook her angry tail (19);
 That wicked comet, which Will Whiston swore
 Would burn the earth that she had drown'd before (20)!

Or

(16) "This last comet (which appeared in the year 1680) I may well call the most remarkable one that ever appeared; since, besides the former consideration, I shall presently shew, that it is no other than that very comet, which came by the earth at the time of Noah's deluge, and *which was the cause of the same.*" Whiston's *Theory of the Earth*, p. 188.

(20) "Since 575 years appear to be the period of the comet that caused the deluge, what a learned friend who was the occasion of my examination of this matter, suggests, will deserve to be considered; viz. Whether the story of the phoenix, that celebrated emblem of the resurrection in Christian antiquity, (that it returns once after five centuries, and goes to the altar and city of the sun, and is there burnt; and another arises out of its ashes, and carries away the remains of the former

Or when Moll Tofts, by throes parturient vex'd,
Saw her young rabbits peep from Esdras'
text (21)!

To

mer, &c.) be not an allegorical representation of this comet, which returns once after five centuries, and goes down to the sun, and is there vehemently heated, and its outward regions dissolved; yet that it flies off again, and carries away what remains after that terrible burning, &c. and whether the *conflagration* and renovation of things, which some such comet may bring on the earth, be not hereby prefigured; I will not here be positive: but I own, that I do not know of any solution of this famous piece of mythology and hieroglyphics, as this seems to be, that can be compared with it." *Ibid.* p. 196.

(21) "'Tis here foretold [by Esdras] that there should be *signs in the woman*; and before all others this prediction has been verified in the famous *rabbit-woman of Surrey*, in the days of King George I.—This story has been so unjustly laughed out of countenance, that I must distinctly give my reasons for believing it to be true, and alledging it here as the fulfilling of this ancient prophecy before us.—1st. The man-midwife, Mr. Howard of Godalmin in Surrey, a person of very great honesty, skill and reputation in his profession, attested it.—It was believed by King George to be real; and it was also be-

C

lieved

To him such signs, prepar'd by mystick grace,
Had shewn the impending doom of Adam's race.

BUT who to blaze his frailties feels delight,
When the great Author rises to our sight ?
When the pure tenour of his life we view,
Himself the bright exemplar that he drew ?
Whose works console the good, instruct the wise,
And teach the soul to claim her kindred skies.

By grateful bards his name be ever sung,
Whose sterling touch has fix'd the English tongue !

Fortune's

lieved by my old friends the Speaker and Mr. Samuel Collet, as they told me themselves, and was generally by sober persons in the neighbourhood. Nay Mr. Molyneux, the Prince's Secretary, a very inquisitive person, and my very worthy friend, assured me he had at first so great a diffidence in the truth of the fact, and was so little biassed by the other believers, even by the King himself, that he would not be satisfied till he was permitted both to see and feel the rabbit, *in that very passage, whence we all come into this world.*" Whiston's *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 110.

Fortune's dire weight, the patron's cold disdain,
 " Shook off, like dew-drops from the lion's
 mane (22);"

Unknown, unaided, in a friendless state (23),
 Without one smile of favour from the great ;

The

(22) " The incumbrances of fortune were shaken from his mind, like dew-drops from the lion's mane." Johnson's *Preface to his edition of Shakspeare*.

(23) Every reader of sensibility must be strongly affected by the following pathetick passages :—" Much of my life has been lost under the pressures of disease ; much has been trifled away ; and much has always been spent in provision for the day that was passing over me ; but I shall not think my employment useless or ignoble, if by my assistance foreign nations and distant ages gain access to the propagators of knowledge, and understand the teachers of truth ; if my labours afford light to the repositories of science, and add celebrity to Bacon, to Hooker, to Milton, and to Boyle."—

" In this work, when it shall be found that much is omitted, let it not be forgotten that much likewise is performed ; and though no book was even spared out of tenderness to the author, and the world is little solicitous to know whence proceeded the faults of that which it condemns, yet it may gratify

The bulky tome his curious care refines,
 Till the great work in full perfection shines :
 His wide research and patient skill displays
 What scarce was sketch'd in ANNA's golden
 days (24) ;

What only learning's aggregated toil
 Slowly accomplish'd in each foreign foil (25).
 Yet to the mine though the rich coin he trace,
 No current marks his early essays grace ;
 For in each page we find a massy store
 Of English bullion mix'd with Latian ore :

In

curiosity to inform it, that the ENGLISH DICTIONARY was written with *little assistance of the learned, and without any patronage of the great; not in the soft obscurities of retirement, or under the shelter of academick bowers, but amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow.*" Preface to Dr. Johnson's Dictionary.

(24) See Swift's letter to Lord Oxford for the institution of an academy to improve and fix the English language.

(25) The great French and Italian Dictionaries were not the productions of an individual, but were compiled by a body of Academicians in each country.

In solemn pomp, with pedantry combin'd,
 He vents the morbid sadness of his mind (26);
 In scientifick phrase affects to smile,
 Form'd on [Brown's turgid Latin-English style
 (27);

Where

(26) "In times and regions so disjointed from each other, that there can scarcely be imagined any communication of sentiments, either by commerce or tradition, has prevailed a general and uniform expectation of propitiating God by corporal austerities, of anticipating his vengeance by voluntary inflictions, and appeasing his justice by a speedy and chearful submission to a less penalty when a greater is incurred." *Rambler*, No. 110.

(27) The style of the *Ramblers* seems to have been formed on that of Sir Thomas Brown's *Vulgar Errors* and *Christian Morals*.

"But ice is water congealed by the frigidity of the air, whereby it acquireth no new form, but rather a consistence or determination of its deffluency, and amitteth not its essence, but condition of fluidity. Neither doth there any thing properly congeliate but water, or watery humidity, for the determination of quicksilver is properly fixation, that of milk coagulation,

Where oft the abstract in stiff state presides (28),
 And members, measur'd periods guides :
 But all propriety his Ramblers mock,
 When Betty prates from Newtown and from
 Locke ;
 When no diversity we trace between
 The lofty moralist and gay fifteen *.—

Yet

lation, and that of oil and unctuous bodies only incrassation."
 —Is this written by Brown or Johnson ?

(28) In the *Ramblers* the abstract too often occurs instead of the concrete ;—one of Dr. Johnson's peculiarities.

* See Victoria's Letter, RAMBLER, No. 130.—" I was never permitted to sleep till I had passed through the cosmetick discipline, part of which was a regular lustration performed with bean-flower water and may dews ; my hair was perfumed with a variety of unguents, by some of which it was to be thickened, and by others to be curled. The softness of my hands was secured by medicated gloves, and my bosom rubbed with a pomade prepared by my mother, of virtue to disperse pimples, and clear discolorations."

Yet genius still breaks through the encumbering
phrase ;

His taste we censure, but the work we praise :

There learning beams with fancy's brilliant
dyes,

Vivid as lights that gild the northern skies ;

Man's complex heart he bares to open day,

Clear as the prism unfolds the blended ray :

The picture from his mind assumes its hue,

The shade's too dark, but the design still true.

THOUGH Johnson's merits thus I freely scan,

And paint the foibles of this wond'rous man ;

Yet can I coolly read, and not admire,

When Learning, Wit and Poetry conspire

To shed a radiance o'er his moral page,

And spread truth's sacred light to many an age :

For all his works with innate lustre shine,

Strength all his own, and energy divine :

While

While through life's maze he darts his piercing
view,

His mind expansive to the object grew.

IN judgment keen he acts the critic's part,
By reason proves the feelings of the heart ;
In thought profound, in nature's study wise,
Shews from what source our fine sensations rise ;
With truth, precision, fancy's claims defines,
And throws new splendour o'er the poet's lines
(29).

WHEN specious sophists with presumption scan
The source of evil, hidden still from man (30);
Revive

(29) See his admirable *Lives of the Poets*, and particularly his Disquisition on metaphysical and religious poetry.

(30) See his Review of Soame Jennings's *Essay on the Origin of Evil*, a master-piece of composition, both for vigour of style and precision of ideas.

Revive Arabian tales (31), and vainly hope
 To rival St. John, and his scholar, Pope (32);
 Though metaphysicks spread the gloom of night,
 By reason's star he guides our aching sight;
 The bounds of knowledge marks; and points
 the way

To pathless wastes, where wilder'd sages stray;
 Where, like a farthing linkboy, J——s stands,
 And the dim torch drops from his feeble hands.

IMPRESSIVE truth, in splendid fiction dress'd
 (33).

Checks the vain wish, and calms the troubled
 breast;

O'er

(31) Pope's or rather Bolingbroke's system was borrowed from the Arabian metaphysicians.

(32) The scheme of the *Essay on Man* was given by Lord Bolingbroke to Pope.

(33) See that sublime and beautiful Tale, *The Prince of Abyssinia*; and *The Rambler*, No. 65, 204, &c. &c.

O'er the dark mind a light celestial throws,
 And sooths the angry passions to repose :
 As oil effus'd illumina and smooths the deep (34),
 When round the bark the swelling surges sweep.
 With various stores of erudition fraught,
 The lively image, the deep-searching thought,
 Slept in repose ;—but when the moment press'd,
 The bright ideas stood at once confess'd (35) ;

Instant

(34) “ The world is disposed to call this a discovery of Dr. Franklin's (from his paper inserted in the Philosophical Transactions), but in this they are much mistaken. Pliny, Plutarch, and other naturalists were acquainted with it.—“ *Ea natura est olei, ut lucem afferat, ac tranquillat omnia, etiam mare, quo non aliud elementum implacabilius.*” *Memoirs of the Society of Manchester.*

(35) Dr. Johnson's extraordinary facility of composition is well known from many circumstances. He wrote forty pages of the Life of Savage in one night. He composed seventy lines of his Imitation of the Tenth Satire of Juvenal, and wrote them down from memory, without altering a word. In the Prologue on opening Drury-Lane theatre, he changed but one word

Infant his genius sped its vigorous rays,
 And o'er the letter'd world diffus'd a blaze :
 As womb'd with fire the cloud electrick flies,
 And calmly o'er the horizon seems to rise ;
 Touch'd by the pointed steel, the lightning flows,
 And all the expanse with rich effulgence glows.

SOFT-EYED compassion with a look benign,
 His fervent vows he offer'd at thy shrine ;
 To guilt, to woe, the sacred debt was paid (36),
 And helpless females blest'd his pious aid ;

Snatch'd

word, and that in compliment to Mr. Garrick. Some of his *Ramblers* were written while the printer's messenger was waiting to carry the copy to the press. Many of the *Idlers* were written at Oxford ; Dr. Johnson often began his task only just in time not to miss the post, and sent away the paper without reading it over.

(36) The dignified and affecting letter written by him to the King in the name of Doctor Dodd, after his condemnation, is justly, and, I believe, universally admired. His benevo-

Snatch'd from disease, and want's abandon'd
crew,

Despair and anguish from their victims flew :
Hope's soothing balm into their bosom's stole,
And tears of penitence restor'd the soul.

BUT hark, he sings! the strain ev'n Pope ad-
mires ;

Indignant Virtue her own bard inspires ;
Sublime as Juvenal, he pours his lays (37),
And with the Roman shares congenial praise ;—
In

lence, indeed, was uniform and unbounded.—I have been as-
sured, that he has often been so much affected by the sight of
several unfortunate women, whom he has seen almost perishing
in the streets, that he has taken them to his own house ; had
them attended with care and tenderness ; and, on their reco-
very, clothed, and placed them in a way of life to earn their
bread by honest industry.

(37) *London*, a Satire, and *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, are
both imitated from Juvenal. On the publication of *London* in

1738,

In glowing numbers now he fires the age,
 And Shakespeare's fun relumes the clouded
 stage (38).

So full his mind with images was fraught,
 The rapid strains scarce claim'd a second thought ;
 And with like ease his vivid lines assume
 The garb and dignity of ancient Rome.—
 Let college *versemen* flat conceits express,
 Trick'd out in splendid shreds of Virgil's drefs ;
 From playful Ovid cull the tinsel phrase,
 And vapid notions hitch in pilfer'd lays ;

Then

1738, Mr. Pope was so much struck by it, that he desired Mr. Doddsley, his bookseller, to find out the author. Doddsley having sought him in vain for some time, Mr. Pope said, he would very soon be *deterred*. Afterwards Mr. Richardson, the painter, found out Mr. Johnson, and Mr. Pope recommended him to Lord Gower.

(38) See the Prologue spoken by Mr. Garrick in 1747, on the opening of Drury-Lane theatre.

Then with Mosaick art the piece combine,
 And boast the glitter of each dulcet line :
 Johnson adventur'd boldly to transfuse
 His vigorous sense into the Latian muse ;
 Aspir'd to shine by unreflected light,
 And with a Roman's ardour *think* and write.
 He felt the tuneful Nine his breast inspire,
 And, like a master, wak'd the * soothing lyre :
 Horatian strains a grateful heart proclaim,
 While Sky's wild rocks resound his Thrallia's
 name.—

Hesperia's plant, in some less skillful hands,
 To bloom a while, factitious heat demands ;
 Though glowing Maro a faint warmth supplies,

The sickly blossom in the hot-house dies :
 By Johnson's genial culture, art, and toil,
 Its root strikes deep, and owns the fost'ring soil ;

Imbibes

* “ *Inter ignota strepitus loquelæ.* ”—Ode to Mrs. Thrale.

Imbibes our fun through all its swelling veins,
And grows a native of Britannia's plains.

How few distinguish'd of the studious train
At the gay board their empire can maintain!
In their own books intomb'd their wisdom lies;
Too dull for talk, their slow conceptions rise:
Yet the mute author, of his writings proud,
For wit unshewn claims homage from the crowd;
As thread-bare misers, by mean avarice school'd,
Expect obeisance from their hidden gold.—
In converse quick, impetuous Johnson press'd
His weighty logick, or sarcastic jest:
Strong in the chace, and nimble in the turns
(39),

For victory still his fervid spirit burns;

Subtle

(39) " A good continued speech (says Bacon in his Es-
says) without a good speech of interlocution, shews slow-
ness;

Subtle, when wrong, invincible when right,
 Arm'd at all points, and glorying in his might,
 Gladiator-like, he traverses the field,
 And strength and skill compel the foe to yield.—
 Yet have I seen him, with a milder air,
 Encircled by the witty and the fair,
 Ev'n in old age with placid mien rejoice
 At beauty's smile, and beauty's flattering voice.—
 With Reynolds' pencil, vivid, bold, and true,
 So fervent Boswell gives him to our view.
 In every trait we see his mind expand;
 The master rises by the pupil's hand;

We

nefs; and a good reply or second speech, without a good settled speech, sheweth shallowness and weakness. As we see in beasts, that those that are weakest in the course, are yet *nimblest in the turn*; as it is betwixt the greyhound and the hare."—If this observation be just, Dr. Johnson is an exception to the rule; for he was certainly as *strong* "in the course, as nimble in the turn;" as ready in "reply," as in "a settled speech."

We love the writer, praise his happy vein,
 Grac'd with the naiveté of the sage Montaigne.
 Hence not alone are brighter parts display'd,
 But ev'n the specks of character portray'd:
 We *see* the Rambler with fastidious smile
 Mark the lone tree, and note the heath-clad
 isle;

But when the heroick tale of Flora charms (40),
 Deck'd in a kilt, he wields a chieftain's arms:
 The tuneful piper founds a martial strain,
 And Samuel sings, " The King shall have his
 ain ;"

Two Georges in his loyal zeal are slur'd (41),
 A gracious *pension* only saves the *third*!—

By Nature's gifts ordain'd mankind to rule,
 He, like a Titian, form'd his brilliant school,
 E And

(40) The celebrated Flora Macdonald. See Boswell's *Tour*.

(41) See Note 4.

And taught congenial spirits to excel,
 While from his lips impressive wisdom fell.
 Our boasted GOLDSMITH felt the sov'reign sway;
 To him we owe his sweet yet nervous lay.
 To Fame's proud cliff he bad our Raphael rise;
 Hence REYNOLDS' pen with REYNOLDS' pencil
 vyes.

While Johnson's flame melodious BURNEY glows
 (42),

While the grand strain in smother cadence
 flows.

And thou, MALONE, to critick learning dear,
 Correct and elegant, refin'd, though clear,
 By studying him, first form'd that classick taste,
 Which high in Shakspeare's fane thy statue
 plac'd.

Near

(42) Dr. Burney's *History of Musick* is equally distinguished for elegance and perspicuity of style, and for scientific knowledge.

Near Johnson STEEVENS stands, on scenic ground,
Acute, laborious, fertile, and profound.

Ingenious HAWKESWORTH to this school we owe,
And scarce the pupil from the tutor know.

Here early parts (43) accomplish'd JONES' su-
blimes,

And science blends with Asia's lofty rhimes:

Harmonious JONES! who in his splendid strains
Sings Camdeo's sports, on Agra's flowery plains;

In Hindu's fictions while we fondly trace

Love and the Muses, deck'd with Attick grace

(44).

Amid

(43) Sir William Jones produced that learned and ingenious work, *Poeseos Asiaticæ Commentarii*, at a very early age.

(44) "The Hindu God, to whom the following poem is addressed, appears evidently the same with the Grecian EROS, and the Roman CUPIDO.—His favourite place of resort is a large tract of country round AGRA, and principally the plains of Matra, where KRISHEN also and the nine GOPIA, who are clearly the Apollo and Muses of the Greeks, usually spend

Amid these names can BOSWELL be forgot,
 Scarce by North Britons now esteem'd a Scot?
 Who to the sage devoted from his youth,
 Imbib'd from him the sacred love of truth;
 The keen research, the exercise of mind,
 And that best art, the art to know mankind.—
 Nor was his ~~en~~ confin'd alone
 To friends around his philosophick throne;
 Its influence wide improv'd our letter'd isle,
 And lucid vigour mark'd the general style:
 As Nile's proud waves, swol'n from their oozy
 bed,

First o'er the neighbouring meads majestic spread;
 Till

the night with music and dance." Preface to the HYMN to
 CAMDEO, translated from the Hindu language into Persian,
 and re-translated by Sir William Jones.

There can be little doubt, considering the antiquity and
 early civilisation of Hindostan, that both the philosophy and
 beautiful mythology of the Greeks were drawn from that part
 of Asia.

Till gathering force they more and more expand,
And with new virtue fertilise the land.

Thus sings the Muse, to Johnson's memory
just,

And scatters praise and censure o'er his dust ;
For through each checker'd scene a contrast ran,
Too sad a proof, how *great*, how *weak* is man !
Though o'er his passions conscience help the
rein,

He shook at dismal phantoms of the brain :
A boundless faith that noble mind debas'd,
By piercing wit, energick reason grac'd :
A generous Briton (45), yet he seem'd to hope
For James's grandson, and for James's Pope :

Though

(45) When Dr. Johnson repeated to Mr. Boswell Goldsmith's beautiful eulogiums on the English nation, his eyes filled with tears.—Boswell's *Tour*, p. 431.—See also the Dissertation on the Bravery of the English common Soldiers, at the end of the *Idler*.

Though proudly splenetick, yet idly vain,
 Accepted *flattery*, and dealt *disdain*.—
 E'en shades like these, to brilliancy ally'd,
 May comfort fools, and curb the Sage's pride.

YET Learning's sons, who o'er his foibles
 mourn,

To latest time shall fondly view his urn;
 And wond'ring praise, to human frailties blind,
 Talents and virtues of the *brightest* kind;
 Revere the man, with various knowledge stor'd,
 Who science, arts, and life's whole scheme ex-
 plor'd;

Who firmly scorn'd, when in a lowly state,
 To flatter vice, or court the vain and great (46);
 Whose heart still felt a sympathetick glow,
 Prompt to relieve man's variegated woe;

Who

(46) It is observable that Dr. Johnson did not prefix a dedication to any one of his various works.

Who even shar'd his talents with his friends

(47);

By noble means who aim'd at noble ends (48);

Whose ardent hope, intensely fix'd on high,

Saw future bliss with intellectual eye.

Still in his breast Religion held her sway,

Disclosing visions of celestial

And gave his soul, amidst this world of strife,

The blest reversion of eternal life:

By

(47) The papers in the *ADVENTURER*, signed with the letter T, are commonly attributed to one of Dr. Johnson's earliest and most intimate friends, Mr. Bathurst; but there is good reason to believe that they were written by Dr. Johnson, and given by him to his friend. At that time Dr. Johnson was himself engaged in writing the *Rambler*, and could ill afford to make a present of his labours. The various other pieces that he gave away, have bestowed fame, and probably fortune, on several persons. To the great disgrace of some of his clerical friends, forty sermons, which he himself tells us he wrote, have not yet been *deterré*.

(48) "Who noble ends by noble means obtains."

POPE.

By this dispell'd, each doubt and horror flies,
And calm at length in holy peace he dies.

THE sculptur'd trophy, and imperial bust,
That proudly rise around his hallow'd dust,
Shall mould'ring fall, by Time's slow hand decay'd,
But the bright deed of virtue ne'er shall fade.
Exulting Genius stamps his sacred name,
Enroll'd for ever in the dome of Fame.

T H E E N D.